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(See page 22)



2nd Quarter  
2011

*"Rest well, yet sleep lightly and hear the call, if again sounded, to provide firepower for freedom..."*

## ***THE JERSEYMAN***

**9 Years - Nr. 70**



*World War II Memorial  
Washington, D.C.*

## THE JERSEYMAN

### **LOOKING BACK...** May 23, 1943

World War II commissioning of the USS *New Jersey*, May 23, 1943. My mother is the taller of the two uniformed WAVE personnel, dead center on the fantail, and facing the camera.

Mom is now 93 years old, and she will be 94 in August. She is very cognizant of the events and details of her assignment, and which happened before she married. She is very proud of her service to her country as a WAVE. Although she would have liked to stay in the navy, she had to leave the service in August 1945, as World War II ended, because even though she had later married she was pregnant with my oldest brother. At that time, WAVES would not permit expectant mothers to remain on active duty, married or not. I think a lot has probably changed in the navy since then.

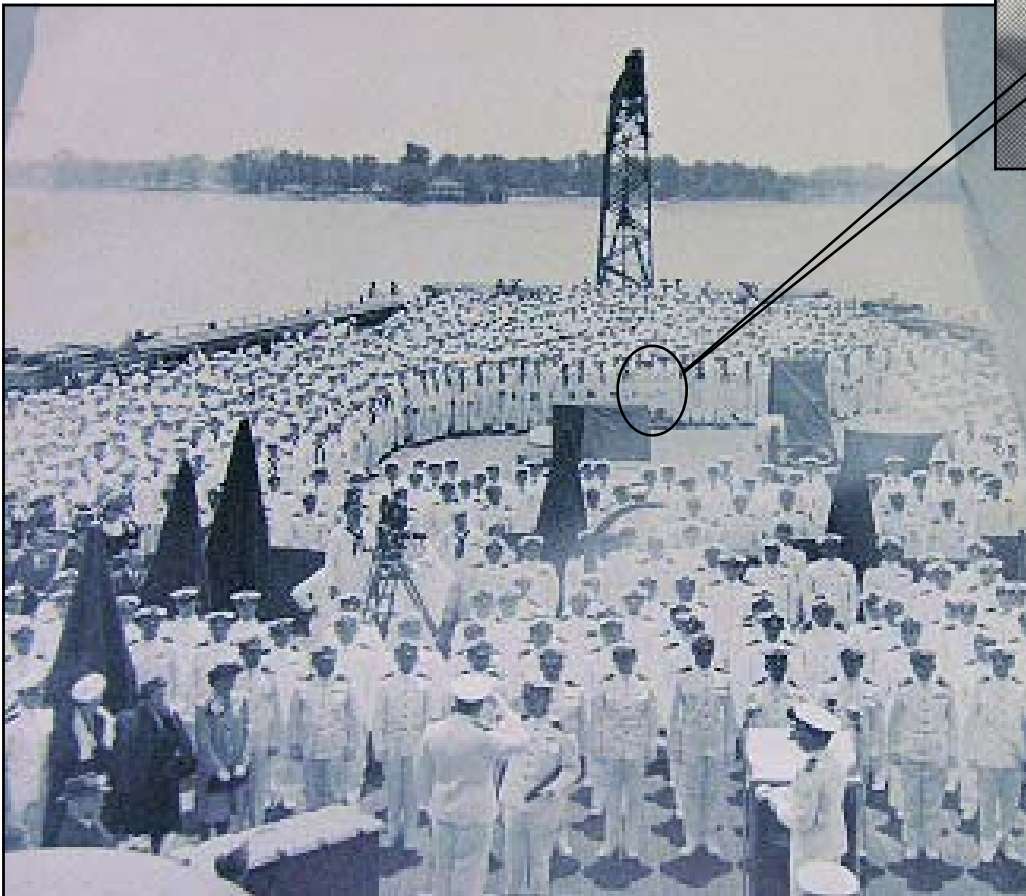
**David Jennings**  
Midlothian, Virginia

**Catherine DeSales Corbett Jennings**, was one of two waves that were assigned to USS *New Jersey* for 1 month before the ship was commissioned. Once the ship was commissioned on 23 May 1943, the WAVES were reassigned back to their original duty station at BUPERS (Bureau of Naval Personnel) in Washington, D.C. Their assignment to battleship New Jersey was to classify crewmen reporting aboard, and to assign them shipboard duty stations.

**WAVES** - "Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service".

Organized in July 1942, 27,000 WAVES were serving on active duty one year later. (Source: Naval History and Heritage Command.)

(Photo from USS *New Jersey* War Log, Pg. 6)



## THE JERSEYMAN

### **LOOKING BACK...** Veteran's Oral History Project - *Catherine DeSales Corbett Jennings*

**David Jennings:** This is the Veteran's oral history of my Mother, **Catherine DeSales Corbett Jennings**, a WAVE Yeoman during World War II. The interview was recorded by her son David Jennings, and conducted by her daughter-in-law Cheri Jennings, on Sunday, February 13th, at her home in Richmond, Virginia.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Cheri Jennings "CJ":** What I would like to start with is if you can tell us how and when you first joined the WAVES - how did it all come about?

**Catherine Jennings:** Well, I had courses in first aid, and I worked for 'Bundles for Britain' and I was just trying to do something to aid in the war effort. The army WACS came along but my family has always been Navy oriented and so I thought I'd just wait and see if the Navy comes along with a women's organization, and sure enough they did. I was in the first class of enlisted WAVES from New York City. I was born in Brooklyn, New York and spent all my life there until I went in the navy.

**CJ:** Where in Brooklyn did you live and can you tell us what you remember?

**Catherine:** We lived at several different addresses but all were located in the Clinton Hills Section of Brooklyn. One home had a view of the Statue of Liberty from the fire escape and in the summer I would sit out there with my Father to catch a breeze. My Father, who was a disabled Navy veteran, died during my senior year in high school in the 1935-36 time frame. I graduated in 1936 from Girls Commercial High School in Brooklyn, NY, which was later named Prospects Heights. After graduation I worked for Metropolitan Life Insurance Company for the next two years and where I did clerical work, the same sort of thing I did in the navy.

**CJ:** Can you tell us how old you were on December 7, 1941, what you remember about that day, and the next few days after Pearl Harbor was bombed?

**Catherine:** Well, I was 23, it was a Sunday, and we had been visiting a cousin at a convent in Philadelphia. Then, on our way home that evening by train, there seemed to be a lot of excitement and talk and we were wondering what was going on. When we arrived at Pennsylvania Station in New York it was a madhouse, and it was then that we found out Pearl Harbor had been

bombed. There were military running in every direction and when we got home my mother was very upset because she felt that we were going to be bombed too.

**CJ:** Were there many WAVES enlisting with you and can you tell us memories up through boot camp?

**Catherine:** There were quite a few girls but not as many as later because we were in the first class. And there was another girl from Metropolitan Life that I knew who also joined at the same time I did.

**CJ:** So from the time you enlisted how long was it before you went to Boot Camp, and where was it?

**Catherine:** It was less than a month after enlisting, in October 1942, when we went to Boot Camp in Stillwater, Oklahoma at Oklahoma Agricultural & Mining. It is now called Oklahoma State College. We were there for two months and received our physicals and all sorts of tests. And then we were issued uniforms and uniform regulations,

we went to class everyday, and everyday we were out on the parade grounds drilling. We also marched in the November 11<sup>th</sup> parade in Stillwater, Oklahoma, which was very exciting to us, our first parade.

**CJ:** When people imagine Boot Camp, they think of it like today with all those physical demands, did they require that you do like sit-ups and push-ups and stuff like that? It wasn't like Boot Camp like we think of today

**Catherine:** All we did was go to drill.

**CJ:** I don't know what that means.

**Catherine:** Go out on the parade ground and learn how to march and to be sure you knew right from left. We learned all the Navy commands and you know we formed into sections and we really did well. I had a picture somewhere of us marching in the parade on November 11<sup>th</sup> in Stillwater, Oklahoma. They had a parade every year on Veterans Day and in the war of course it was even more so. I wish I had the picture because we all had our white hats and our white gloves and when we were marching in unison you could see why we had to wear our white gloves and white hats. Another picture we had-- Gene Autry came and we all went to the show and they had the WAVES sitting in one section and there was a sailor's training camp in Tulsa which was near us sitting across from us. You could see the WAVES sitting there and we all had our white hats and our white gloves and when we clapped you could see all the white hands at the same time. **Gene Autry** came along on his horse and he took off his hat and bowed to all of us.

**CJ:** Oh, that's neat! You never told me that story.



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**CJ: Were there any particularly funny stories that you can remember about Boot Camp?**

**Catherine:** One in particular and after lights out. There were three in our room, and we were all doing something we shouldn't be doing. One was writing letters with a flash light and I was washing my hair and I forget what the other girl was doing, when we heard the WAVE officer coming down to check on us, and that was a surprise check to see if our lights were out. I jumped in bed with my hair soaking wet wrapped in a towel and it took me three days to dry out my pillow.

**CJ: Where were you assigned to duty after Boot Camp?**

**Catherine:** BUPERS, the Bureau of Naval Personnel at Arlington Annex in Washington D.C. We were a brand new section called the Enlisted Classification Section of the Enlisted Personnel Division.

**CJ: And was that what they trained you to do in Boot Camp?**

**Catherine:** Yes, we had refresher courses in stenography, typing, spelling, etc.. Naval procedures and uniform regulations were also included.

**CJ: How to classify personnel?**

**Catherine:** That was my first duty.

**CJ: Great! How long after you were assigned to BUPERS in Washington were you assigned to U.S.S. New Jersey?**

**Catherine:** Well, we were at BUPERS only 5 months when we received the New Jersey orders, and I was excited because I found out it was the first time that women had been assigned to a battle ship. Women assigned to a battle ship commissioning -- the first time in history!

**CJ: So that was an honor?**

**Catherine:** Definitely it was. There were two of us assigned to the U.S.S. New Jersey.

**CJ: How long were you assigned to the ship and along with that, can you remember when you arrived and when you reported aboard?**

**Catherine:** We didn't report to the ship, we reported to a building at the Philadelphia Navy yard because the ship had not been finished and commissioned. The building at the Philadelphia Navy yard was a regular Navy office then, and being used by the pre-commissioning detail.

**CJ: Right. So how long were you assigned to ship duty even though you were in this other office building?**

**Catherine:** A month.

**CJ: I think when we looked it up earlier it was from April 13 through May 23<sup>rd</sup> something like that in 1943. What was the name of your WAVE ship mate**

**that was assigned to the ship with you?**

**Catherine:** Marcella Grannis.

**CJ: Where did you stay when you were assigned to the ship?**

**Catherine:** At the Ben Franklin Hotel where all the WAVES were quartered at that time - in Philadelphia I think.

**CJ: They didn't have barracks for the WAVES?**



**Catherine:** They didn't have barracks and we were assigned to the Ben Franklin Hotel. There were four WAVES to a room and I believe that the others were all going to the hospital apprentice school.

**CJ: What do you remember about the commissioning day of the U.S.S. New Jersey on May 23, 1943?**

**Catherine:** Well, it was pretty exciting of course. The bands were playing and we had to assemble on the dock and then we went aboard ship. When they made the call to 'man the ship!' I was scared to death that I'd fall on my face running up the gangplank.

We had to get white uniforms, Marcella and I for that day. It was the first time I had worn a white uniform and I was really very thrilled about the whole thing. The flags were flying and lots of excitement.

**CJ: What do you remember most about your U.S.S. New Jersey duty?**

**Catherine:** Well, frankly it was just like any other office duty. We interviewed and classified members of the crew and we did clerical work for the personnel department of the U.S.S. New Jersey, the usual yeoman duty.

**CJ: When the commissioning was over where were you assigned?**

**Catherine:** I went back to my previous duty at BUPERS at the Enlisted Classification Section of the Enlisted Personnel Division at BUPERS in Washington at Arlington Annex. You better put that because I didn't work in the Navy Department.

**CJ: Got it, Arlington Annex, and how long were you in the Navy?**

**Catherine:** Three years. From September 1942 to August 1945 when the war ended. Our section of the Enlisted Personnel Division in Washington designed the original qualifications card. I don't know if they still use it but that's what we used when I was assigned to the U.S.S. New Jersey to classify and assign personnel. Each sailor had to fill out this qualifications card and in that way a lot of

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decisions were made about the department of the ship they would be assigned.

**CJ: What are you looking at there Mom?**

**Catherine:** This is the War Log from U.S.S. New Jersey, and I'm looking for **Commander McDowell**. I think that was his name.

Yes... this is Commander McDowell he was the Executive Officer, and that's the one who was the friend of **Commander Blann**, my boss, and who he sent all the ship's printed material. Commander Blann had asked him to send it all to him. Commander McDowell was a nice man - I had met him so many times; you know when I was working there.

**CJ: Can you show it to us? How did you get that book?**

**Catherine:** Commander McDowell who was the executive officer at that time, sent this material to Commander Blann who was the commanding officer in charge of our division. Marcella and I each got one.

**CJ: So, let me back up a little bit. On a day-to-day basis when you were working on classifying all the sailors on the ship, how many people were in the office on a day-to-day basis and what were the duties?**

**Catherine:** Well there was Marcella and I, another male yeoman and usually the chief yeoman, **Lester Anderson**.

**CJ: How about the other yeoman?**

**Catherine:** I can't remember the other yeoman. He was from Ohio and he was just an apprentice, he was so funny.

**CJ: Why was he so funny?**

**Catherine:** He was just cute, you know he had never been away from home and he said he put on so much weight since he has been in the Navy.

**CJ: Because of all the good food.**

**Catherine:** Yeah all the good food. He ate three meals a day which he ordinarily wouldn't do.

**CJ: Was he younger than you and Marcella?**

**Catherine:** Yes, he was younger.

**CJ: That reminds me of Dad's story about going in the Navy and wondering why would anybody complain. They got three meals a day and they had a warm place to sleep and they didn't have to share a bed with anybody.**

**Catherine:** And he said he was getting fat in the Navy.

**CJ: So when you were classifying the sailors for their assignments, you were mentioning to us earlier that there was some kind of form that you used? What was it called?**



**Catherine:** We were going by a qualifications card. Usually they also had IQ test results because they were given IQ tests when enlisting and any previous experience they had at a previous job or in school was also listed.

**CJ: Remember when I asked about funny stories... You had mentioned to us several times about being in Oklahoma and something about "grits", do you remember that story about grits?**

**Catherine:** Oh, that was when our first group of WAVES went into the dining room for breakfast the first time. All the southern girls were very excited; "Oh, grits, grits" they said, and all the northern girls would look around at one another saying, "what's grits?"

**CJ: Did you eat them?**

**Catherine:** I didn't eat any it looked like farina to me. Maybe I did taste them but I didn't like them.

**CJ: Why did you get out of the Navy?**

**Catherine:** Because I was pregnant and it was the end of the war. But I know that today they keep women in the Navy even when they are pregnant.

**CJ: : Were you asked to leave?**

**Catherine:** No. You just knew that when you were pregnant you left the navy - rules. I got out on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August and I think the war ended on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August.

**CJ: Had that rule not been in effect, would you have stayed, would you have made a career?**

**Catherine:** Yes. Definitely, I would do it again in a heart beat. I enjoyed the whole time; I enjoyed my ship mates, my job, and my bosses. I just would have stayed in.

**CJ: Oh, I had one question earlier... When you went to your Mom and told her that you wanted to be in the Navy, what did she think?**

**Catherine:** She thought it was funny at first; she said "you are serious?" I said yes, I said they have girls in the Army now, they have the WACS and I said I would like to go in the Navy if it ever came to be and it was.

**CJ: But how did you find out about it?**

**Catherine:** Oh, it was in --- you know it was in the newspapers. They put it in the paper right away you know. And they said that --- if you are interested to write in. So I wrote a letter and immediately got a reply back because they were trying to get girls in. Then I had to go to the Third Naval District in New York City where I finally wound up in the end, it's just funny. You know I enlisted there in that building and I went back to work there when I ended my naval career. I was 26.

**CJ: What did your other sisters think about you joining the WAVES?**

**Catherine:** They thought it was wonderful, they thought it was great especially since my Dad was in the Navy. One of my older sisters joined the Navy too about six months after I did.

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**CJ: Did anybody like tell you not to do it?**

Catherine: No. They were all very proud of me.

**CJ: They were proud of you. I'm proud of you and I wasn't even there.**

**Catherine:** Yes, --- you put that in there my family was very proud of me because my father had been in the Navy and a disabled veteran. My brother-in-law, **Eddie Anderson**, was great. Every time I went home on leave he insisted on taking me all the way back to Pennsylvania station to get back to D.C. on the train.

**Catherine:** Thank you so much Dave I can't believe you went to all this trouble.

**Dave Jennings:** No trouble at all. I am just glad that Chief Helvig wants to print your story.

**Catherine:** I keep thinking they are making such a big thing over these guys who are veterans of World War II. They never say a thing about the women who were veterans of World War II. Of course the men who were in combat deserve all of the praise that they get.

**Dave Jennings:** That's why Tom is so adamant about getting information from you for The Jerseyman.

**CJ: And that's why your stories are important -- but nobody has ever asked for them.**

**Catherine:** Even in the paper an obituary will say he was a veteran of World War II but you never see a woman mentioned as a veteran, or rarely.

**Dave Jennings:** There was a very small amount of women who are veterans of World War II compared to the men.

**Catherine:** Well, there were a lot of nurses, WACS, WAVES, SPARS and civilian women who flew planes and supplies.

**Dave Jennings:** Plus these women are still alive Mom.

**Catherine:** There were lot of nurses and there were more in the Army. They were more WACS than there were WAVES.

**Catherine:** Here's one thing that was funny but we can't put that in. We were next to Fort Belvoir, our WAVE quarters and we didn't have a chapel. They had one at Fort Belvoir but they had a gate between the two sides. They said that we could go, the Catholic girls, who wanted to, could come over there to go to Mass on Sunday. I think it was 10 o'clock or something. So they opened the gate on Sunday mornings so the Catholic girls could walk to chapel. I think there were 10 of us, we would go walking through the gate and the WAC quarters were right inside the gate. We would be all dressed up in our uniforms with our white gloves and the WAC girls would come outside from inside their barracks you know, and they will say all kinds of things to us about our uniforms. Most of them were real nice and they had their clothes hanging on the line and we

could see they even had to wear khaki colored underwear. We used to go all out with our underwear because you know we were wearing uniforms. We, with all our fancy underwear and those poor girls had to wear khaki colored underwear. I thought, my God, am I glad I didn't go into the WACS. We got to know some of them and we invited them over to see our barracks, and they couldn't get over our barracks because we had individual rooms. We had a little single bed and a dresser, a desk, a lamp and a chair. Well, they couldn't get over that, but when I came back from the New Jersey, they had cut down all the partitions and we were all in stacks. Our rooms were gone and we had to sleep like they did in the barracks - on bunks.

**Catherine:** Irene was French and bunked in the room next to mine. We always celebrated when we made advancement in rating and she made 2<sup>nd</sup> class. She went and got a bottle of wine and brought it back to the WAVE quarters so that all who lived near her could have a glass of wine and toast her. We decided that we'd better not do that because somebody might report us and Irene took the bottle of wine to her room and drank the whole bottle.

**CJ: : How'd that do?**

**Catherine:** She had never had that much to drink before and during the night I heard this racket going on and there was Irene, sick as a dog. She was throwing up all over the place so we all got up out of bed and we got her, we took her to the shower, we cleaned her off. We stayed up all night cleaning her room so the Wave in charge of the quarters would not find out that her room was a mess. I can never forget that. She was so sick - it was terrible.

**CJ: Was that in DC?**

**Catherine:** That was in WAVE quarters in Arlington.

**CJ: You guys couldn't go to a club or something?**

**Dave Jennings: Not unescorted ladies.**

**Catherine:** We had a solarium at the end of our wing you could get down there and sit and talk or whatever.

**CJ: You weren't allowed to have alcohol in the barracks?**

**Catherine:** Oh no.... and then when I heard this noise I thought she must be sick because it was just like paper thin walls and I got up and hollered, I said "Irene" and she didn't answer me so I got up and opened her door, the door wasn't locked. Oh, it was terrible. "Oh, I'm so sick, I am so sick." So I got all the other girls around her, you know we all got around, got her up and went in and dragged her out. We put her in the shower right at the end of the wing. We even had people to clean up for us in that first group. We went to the maid's closet in the corridor and we cleaned up her room because we were scared to death the WAVE officer would make a surprise visit and find us out. Luckily she did not come to our wing that day - she would have known right away that

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something happened. We did all that work for nothing.

**CJ: I don't know for nothing. She was your friend and if she got in trouble everybody probably would have.**

**Catherine:** Oh yes, she would have got in trouble.

**CJ: Yeah, but how about everybody else?**

**Catherine:** Because she had the wine in the barracks, it was strictly forbidden. She would have gone to a Captain's Mast and then he decides if she needed further punishment you know, and oh, there were six of us trying to clean up that room.

**CJ: So until you got married to Dad you lived in the barracks. You lived in barracks for couple of years?**

**Catherine:** No, because when we got to be first class, we got extra money if we want to live off the base.

**CJ: Oh they gave you like a housing supplement?**

**Catherine:** Yes, so we would get like six or so WAVES together and rent an apartment, you know, or then we got together depending on how many bedrooms in the apartment.

**CJ: That makes sense. For some reasons I thought maybe you were in the barracks.**

**Catherine:** So a lot of them did that because a lot of them asked me if I wanted to go in with them but I was already planning to get married then. I was first class. I wish now I had. **Mary Sdao** and I were such good friends and we sent Christmas cards for years. The last Christmas card I got from her was in 2005 and she was in assisted living and she wasn't well, so I didn't get a card after that, I think she was 95. She was a little older than me and she was from Philadelphia. We wrote to each other all the time. **Mary Sdao, Edith Neftal**, and my roommates **Mary Anderson** and **Helen Kelly** among others—I knew them all so well..

**CJ: It has been a long time.**

**Catherine:** Sixty years.

**Catherine:** **Mary Anderson** here came from Richmond. And that **Chief, Lester Anderson** --I was reading Dad's Navy newsletter, *Ship Colors* you know, and they put all the people who had died that year and his name was in there. Anderson, but he had been -- I think he was lieutenant and he went up through the ranks too. He was a chief when I knew him.

**CJ: When was the last time you heard from your Commander Blann?**

**Catherine:** He was transferred to California just shortly before I left. I did not want to stay in BUPERS if he was not going to be my boss, so I asked to go to New York.

**CJ: And you did not stay in touch after the war?**

**Catherine:** No. You don't, not with your commanding officer.

**CJ: No, I was just curious.**

**Catherine:** He came from Washington. D.C.

**CJ: If you have stayed in the Navy, would your paths have probably crossed?**

**Catherine:** He was in the Army. I do not know what he was in civilian life but he was something... Psychology or something. He was in the Army, a Colonel or a Lieutenant Colonel and he was transferred into the Navy. He was the first one in our section and then Marcella and I came, and there were just three of us. When I left there, there were WAVES; three naval officers and a chief so it really grew. **Lt. Ducey** was a WAVE officer in our group. We all liked her and felt so sorry for her when her younger brother was killed in the Battle of the Bulge.

**Lt. Wiggs**, a male yeoman in our group was known to all of us as "Wiggys". He wanted to go to the Navy so badly because he wanted to go to sea. It's all he could talk about "I am stuck at a desk job," and he did everything he could. So later I found out he got assigned to a ship and got desperately sea-sick. So they had to take him off the ship and give him a shore job.

**CJ: So you, I never realized this you actually met Dad, your husband, in your office. He came and worked in your office for a couple months and that's how you met him?**

**Catherine:** He came to our office on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1943, New Year's Day. It was him, Marcella, and I and Commander Blann. Four of us, and then he was there just about six months I guess when they were looking for somebody for the OSS. He was stationed at the OSS in Washington, D.C. We were married March 4, 1944 and he was sent to London in April. I didn't see him again until the following February.

**CJ: You did not date him when he was in your office, when he worked with you, you did not date him?**

**Catherine:** No. They had an ice skating arena in Washington and every one was going, and he asked me if I wanted to go and he paid for my ticket. That was the first date, the ice skating show. And we were all in a group that was fun. We had the best time—practically the whole office went and by then there were other guys.

**Kennefick** and **Hickey** and they were from Massachusetts and their ship had gone down, I don't remember the name of the ship. They had been rescued and then had been in rehab for couple of months before joining our office. They were a pair, typical Bostonians. Lots of fun. Everybody put them together, Kennefick and Hickey. And both of their names were Joe. **Joe Kennefick** and **Joe Hickey** so we just used to call them Kennefick and Hickey.

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**CJ: Oh, that's funny -- like Mutt and Jeff.**

**Catherine:** Oh, Mutt and Jeff because they had been rescued together and they were good friends and apparently they got assigned to BUPERS together. I don't know if they asked for that. You can ask for something but that doesn't mean you would get it. I asked for California, I wanted to go to California. I asked for California and I got Washington. And Marcella was from California and wanted California too and they sent her all the way to Washington. So I mean you could ask --- I don't know how they figured it out. Then there was a Lieutenant who was at the training school. Little old guy he kept saying, "You don't want to go to California you're a Brooklyn girl." Apparently he was from Brooklyn too.

**CJ: He was talking you out of it when you were in Oklahoma.**

**Catherine:** We could list then where we wanted to go you know. He didn't want me to go, so he is the one who is responsible why I got Washington -- "you don't want to go to California you're a Brooklyn girl."

**CJ: Oh wow, you are right. That would have been a totally different life.**

**Catherine:** Different, completely different.

**CJ: We've been told that there are 54,000 women serving in the US Navy today and many of them serving at sea. And according to Tom, there are plans for women to serve aboard submarines in 2012. Having served in a different navy during WWII, do you have any thoughts about the limited job assignments the WAVES had during WWII, and compared to what is available today? And what are your thoughts on having women serve on ships and submarines doing the same jobs as the men?**

**Catherine:** Wow, 54,000 WAVES! I remember when we had 10,000 WAVES in Washington, DC during the War.

First of all, regardless of the times, I don't approve of women serving onboard ship and especially not in submarines. Remember, it's my generation speaking, but in some part of my mind I find it degrading for women to live in those conditions, and I don't see how that improves the status of women in the Navy.

A woman doing the physically demanding job of a man does not prove anything to me. I was raised that men and women are different and we each have our own strengths. I toured a ship when

I was part of a Tidewater Virginia Veteran WAVES Association and could not believe how rugged the living quarters were, and the real absence of privacy between the men and women.

I've also been on a submarine and at that time each sailor had about 3 feet of personal space. I believe that under those conditions there would be both men and women alike who would not be comfortable with the situation.

There are many jobs that are more suitable for women in administrative, clerical, medical and technology fields but for duty on shore and overseas, not onboard ships and submarines. There is no compelling reason in my mind for a woman to serve on a ship or submarine when there are plenty of men available for those assignments. It is 2011 and there is certainly not world weace, but the United States is not fighting in a World War like we did in the 1940's.

Our country was at war in 1942 when I enlisted. Women from all over the country wanted to make a difference in the war effort and we enlisted with the intent to do the jobs performed by men and to free the men for sea duty in Europe and in the South Pacific. I can give you a personal example. My late husband E.K. Jennings, joined our office in Washington, DC as a Senior Yeoman and served with our group for several months. As the war continued, his service was needed with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), so he left our group to serve in that more dangerous job and I was assigned his duties. He was also a "Mustang" and retired as a Lieutenant with 20 years service. The entire country was united during WWII and every job a WAVE could do ashore released another man for sea duty.

**CJ: Thanks Mom. We are all very proud of you and for what you did in WWII!**



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Catherine Jennings

Official US Navy Photo

### Cheri Jennings:

“**Marcella Grannis**, who went on to share the USS *New Jersey* pre-commissioning experience with Catherine Jennings, was also Mom’s classmate from boot camp. Mom tried, but this photo was too small for her to also single out Marcella.

I counted the number of WAVES in this group photo above, at Oklahoma A & M University (the First WAVE Yeoman graduation class of World War II). There are 98 women in this class from cities and towns all across the United States.”

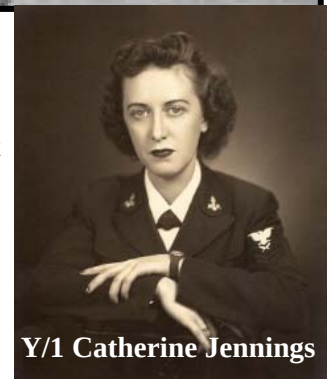
### Editor’s Notes:

This oral history interview with World War II WAVE Yeoman 1/c (Y1) Catherine Jennings was much longer than what could be presented here in *The Jerseyman*, but we included as much as our limited space would allow.

We are grateful to the Jennings family for their assistance and hard work in producing this oral history. The World War II oral history of Catherine Jennings is now included in the Veteran’s History Project managed aboard Battleship New Jersey by retired Kean University Professor, and battleship volunteer, **Tom Banit, PhD**.

Family photos were provided courtesy of “**David Jennings Photography**”, and with special thanks to **Scott Dickens**, President of Rocket Pop Media for the loan of video equipment and technical assistance for Mrs. Jennings’ oral history video. We also thank “**CJ**”, **Cheryl Jennings**, for conducting the oral history, and for the many extra hours that she spent editing conversions of video to text for this issue of *The Jerseyman*.

For those World War II, and Korean War veterans that have not yet completed an oral history interview, and want to participate, please contact **Tom Banit** at [tbanit@yahoo.com](mailto:tbanit@yahoo.com). - TH



Y/1 Catherine Jennings

## **THE JERSEYMAN**

***LOOKING BACK...*** (Reprinted with permission of the Charleston Post and Courier...)

### ***YOU CAN LEAVE THE MILITARY -- BUT IT NEVER REALLY LEAVES YOU...***

By Ken Burger, The Charleston Post and Courier: Thursday, March 4, 2010

Occasionally, I venture back to NAS, Meridian, where I'm greeted by an imposing security guard who looks carefully at my identification card, hands it back and says, "Have a good day, Senior Chief".

Every time I go back to any Navy Base it feels good to be called by my previous rank, but odd to be in civilian clothes, walking among the servicemen and servicewomen going about their duties as I once did, many years ago.

The military is a comfort zone for anyone who has ever worn the uniform. It's a place where you know the rules and know they are enforced -- a place where everybody is busy, but not too busy to take care of business.

Because there exists behind the gates of every military facility an institutional understanding of respect, order, uniformity, accountability and dedication that becomes part of your marrow and never, ever leaves you.

Personally, I miss the fact that you always knew where you stood in the military, and who you were dealing with. That's because you could read somebody's uniform from 20 feet away and know the score.

Service personnel wear their careers on their sleeves, so to speak. When you approach each other, you can read their name tag, examine their rank and, if they are in dress uniform, read their ribbons and know where they've served.

I miss all those little things you take for granted when you're in the ranks, like breaking starch on a set of fatigues fresh from the laundry and standing in a perfectly straight line military formation that looks like a mirror as it stretches to the endless horizon.

I miss the sight of troops marching in the early morning mist, the sound of boot heels thumping in unison on the tarmac, the bark of drill instructors and the sing-song answers from the squads as they pass by in review.

To romanticize military service is to be far removed from its reality, because it's very serious business -- especially in times of war.

But I miss the salutes I'd throw at officers and the crisp returns as we criss-crossed with a "by your leave sir".

I miss the smell of jet fuel hanging heavily on the night air and the sound of engines roaring down runways and disappearing into the clouds. The same while on carrier duty.

I even miss the hurry-up-and-wait mentality that enlisted men gripe about constantly, a masterful invention that bonded people more than they'll ever know or admit.

I miss people taking off their hats when they enter a building, speaking directly and clearly to others and never showing disrespect for rank, race, religion or gender.

Mostly, I miss being a small cog in a machine so complex it constantly circumnavigates the Earth and so simple it feeds everyone on time, three times a day, on the ground, in the air or at sea.

Mostly, I don't know anyone who has served who regrets it, and doesn't feel a sense of pride when they pass through those gates and re-enter the world they left behind - with their youth.

Face it guys - we all miss it.....Whether you had one tour, or a career, it shaped your life.

*"A veteran is someone who, at one point in his/her life, wrote a blank check made payable to The United States of America', for an amount up to, and including my life."* (Author Unknown)

**LOOKING BACK...**

Comments on last Quarter's issue of *The Jerseyman*

(by Bill Lee, Historian for the  
USS WEST POINT Reunion Association)

I was 13 when the "Mighty Mo" went aground off Buckroe Beach, VA. (LCDR Don Bishop, USN/Retired, 1Q 2011 Pg. 7) I remember vividly, riding down to the shoreline with my folks to see the sight. As noted, the media gave the Navy a lot of grief - and that was before journalism took a hard (and apparently permanent) left turn...

Seeing a picture of the USS *MOBILE* (CL-63) bell (QMC Edward J. Buckalew, USN/Retired, 1Q 2011, Pg. 10) makes me wonder: was that bell cast at the Newport News Shipbuilding foundry? I assume so, but have no idea how to find out. At some point, probably after the war, the yard undoubtedly out-sourced such things, reserving foundry capacity for larger pours.

The cruiser was built there (NNS Hull#391). So was a second *MOBILE* (LKA-115) seen in the photo below. I remember watching her slide into the sea in 1968.

During WW II, I believe her peacetime ship's bell remained in place. In 1964, when she was sold foreign, that bell was donated to the American Merchant Marine Museum in King's Point, NY.



**Bill Lee**  
Monroe, North Carolina

**LOOKING BACK...** USS *New Jersey* May 1951

I went to boot camp in Rhode Island on January 10, 1951, and then proudly wore a Fireman's red stripes. If I remember right, I went aboard the *New Jersey*, my first ship, in about the end of March, while the ship was still in drydock. After a shakedown cruise, we headed for Korea, and returned by the end of December 1951. From there we had a cruise to Lisbon, Portugal and Cherbourg, France. I was attached to "A" Division, and my GQ Station was of course below decks, but after 60 years, for some reason, I can't seem to remember for the life of me just where it was!

I stood watches in two of the port side 5" 38's, forward and aft. I was in the handling room right under each mount. We couldn't see anything from there either, but we did a lot of firing. On the day we got hit by the North Koreans in May of 1951, I had been standing on the weather decks, port side, and watching some small boats when all of a sudden I saw splashes and quickly realized what was happening, so I took off to the first hatch just as General Quarters blew. From there on I was below decks.

When I hear, and read other stories, I didn't realize just how many near misses we actually had in May of 1951, but I saw that day's "incoming" as being up close and personal. It opened my eyes quite a bit.

When we were on our way back to Norfolk, my Commander asked me what I wanted to do now, and what school I would like to go to. When I told him Engineman School he couldn't believe it, but said, it's yours if you want it. But then he said: "I could promise you 1st class Yeoman if you'll take it". I was probably foolish in not accepting it but that's what happened.

So I went to Engineman School in Great Lakes and then back to Norfolk waiting for assignment. From there I transferred to Boston aboard the USS *Baltimore* (CA-68) in April 1953 and was discharged out of Boston on November 8th 1954. We made a few trips to the Med and also to the scandinavian countries of, Oslo, Norway, Stockholm, Sweden, and Copenhagen, Denmark.

I Didn't get my Petty Officer's crow until after I got out of Enginemen School, transferred aboard the Cruiser *Baltimore* and was assigned to the Boat Gang. I ran the liberty boats, and kept the engines running. Had watches in Forward Diesel and Aft Diesel, Ice Machine, Shaft Alleys etc... all fond memories today.

**Jack Haughan**  
Eastport, New York



## THE JERSEYMAN



I didn't have many scary experiences of any consequence, thank the Lord, because frankly I flew with some really great pilots. But one experience to mention, happened in the mid 1980's as we were operating out of Lajes, Azores. We were tasked to find a lost USNA schooner (ASTRAL) which had not been heard from in the Bay of Biscay. We took off and proceeded to the area that was the best area to start a search. We started an expanding box search and I was tasked to monitor a certain frequency and to transmit frequently to see if we could raise her. We got on station at 5000 feet and the weather was really bad --- sea state was better than a 5, and visibility was less than a quarter mile, if that. Our pilot at the time decided to descend, even after all the other sorties had decided it was too risky due to poor visibility at 5000 feet. So with the co-pilot calling out the altitude, we started to descend and I recall listening on the ICS as he called out "5,000 4,500, 4,000, 3,500..." and around that time a Chief, assigned with us, dived into the aft ditching station next to me.

I remember laughing a bit as he really looked scared as hell. Then it was: "3,000, 2,500, 2,000, 1,500, 1,000, 500..." We also need to remember that our Squadron standard notes said our minimums were 300 feet, and as I recall, that was **only in VFR conditions!** Here we are at that altitude and I still can't see anything.

In about a minute or so, we banked hard to port and I am staring out my bubble window at the Comm Station when suddenly I saw the stern end of a container ship --just briefly, but damn it looked like we had *just* missed that sucker! Anyway, upon returning, the Chief went to the skipper complaining about our pilot and we all had to make statements. Eventually the Chief quietly left the Squadron.

Other than that I had a great ride and loved every minute of it.

**Walt Eife. AT1, USN/Retired, (Flight Communicator)  
 Westmont, New Jersey  
 Battleship New Jersey Volunteer**

## **THE JERSEYMAN**

**LOOKING BACK...** 70 years ago... (An excerpt from *This Day in History...*)

### **September 28, 1941 - Ted Williams becomes last player to hit .400**

On this day in 1941, the Boston Red Sox's Ted Williams plays a double-header against the Philadelphia Athletics on the last day of the regular season and gets six hits in eight trips to the plate, to boost his batting average to .406 and become the first player since Bill Terry in 1930 to hit .400. Williams, who spent his entire career with the Sox, played his final game exactly 19 years later, on September 28, 1960, at Boston's Fenway Park and hit a home run in his last time at bat, for a career total of 521 homeruns.

Williams was born on August 30, 1918, in San Diego, and began his major league career with the Red Sox in 1939. 1941 marked Williams' best season. In addition to his .406 batting average--no major league player since has hit .400--the left fielder led the league with 37 homers, 135 runs and had a slugging average of .735. Also that season, Williams, whose nicknames included "The Splendid Splinter" and "The Thumper," had an on-base percentage of .553, a record that remained unbroken for 61 years, until Barry Bonds achieved a percentage of .582 in 2002.

In 1942, Williams won the American League Triple Crown, for highest batting average and most RBIs and homeruns. He duplicated the feat in 1947. In 1946 and 1949, he was named the American League's Most Valuable Player and in June 1960, he became the fourth player in major league history to hit 500 homers. He was selected to the All-Star team 17 times.

Williams played his last game on September 28, 1960, and retired with a lifetime batting average of .344, a .483 career on-base percentage and 2,654 hits. His achievements are all the more impressive because his career was interrupted twice for military service: Williams was a Marine Corps pilot during World War II and the Korean War and as a result missed a total of nearly five seasons from baseball.

Williams, who was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1966, managed the Washington Senators (renamed the Texas Rangers in 1972) from 1969 to 1972. In 1984, the Boston Red Sox retired his uniform number (nine). Williams died of cardiac arrest at age 83 on July 5, 2002, in Florida.

#### **Quotations by Ted Williams:**

- - **"Baseball is the only field of endeavor where a man can succeed three times out of ten and be considered a good performer."**
- - **"I don't care to be known as a .400 hitter with a lousy average of .39955."**  
(Ted Williams, just before playing the final game in 1941 that brought his average up to .406)
- - **"Hitting is fifty percent above the shoulders."**
- - **"A man has to have goals—for a day, for a lifetime—and that was mine, to have people say... 'There goes Ted Williams, the greatest hitter who ever lived.'"**
- - **"The greatest team I ever played for was the Marine Corps."**

## THE JERSEYMAN

### LOOKING BACK... Ted Williams—1941



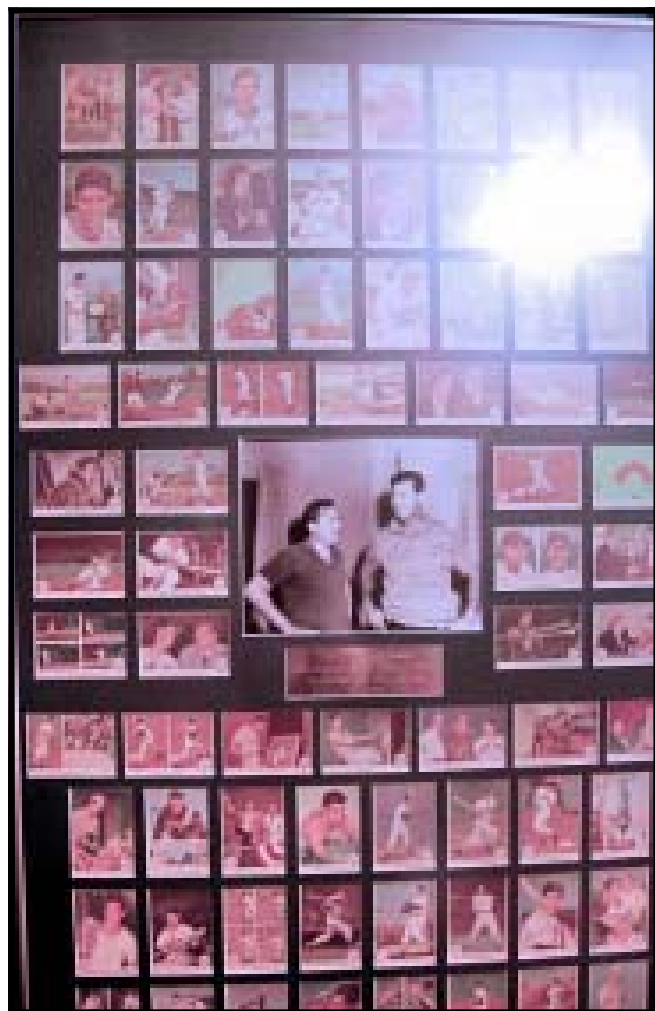
**Editor's note:**

At left, **Billy Baxter**, a World War II USS *New Jersey* "N" Division crewman, is shown in OCS uniform. According to Baxter, "I had been recommended for OCS by Captain Holden and Commander Hahn of "N" Division."

After the war, Billy represented Ted Williams when Sears Roebuck had named Williams to head up their sports department.

*"This framed set of original Ted Williams baseball cards will be donated to the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York at my passing".*

**Billy Baxter**  
New York City



## THE JERSEYMAN

**LOOKING BACK...** April 1957

### NIMITZ AND SPRUANCE

Taking note of the photograph on the cover of *THE JERSEYMAN*, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2011, made me recall an event that took place involving these two gentlemen during April of 1957.

I was serving in the Bureau of Naval Personnel at the time and was asked if I wanted to be assigned as aide to **Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz** during his visit to the east coast. There was no hesitation there. Of course! It would be a distinct honor. So I made preparations to carry out my assignment.



The purpose of the admiral's visit was to take part in OPERATION REMEMBER in New York City where prominent officers of World War II were honored. It promised to be a memorable occasion. But the day before departure I was called to his daughter's house where I found the admiral in bed with a high fever. He was quite a sight under covers up to his chin, a beet-red face set off by his shock of white hair. He was ill. I was directed to cancel his participation in the New York event and to return later to reschedule his time while in Washington.

The schedule was most impressive. Included were Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson; Secretary of the Navy Thomas Gates; Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Arleigh Burke; Mr. Eugene Meyer, publisher of *THE WASHINGTON POST*; and Uncle Carl. In the latter, I told him I needed help there. It was The Honorable Carl Vinson, Chairman of the powerful House Armed Services Committee.

Once the schedule was set, we made the rounds. I got him to the offices but did not enter with him save for that of Mr. Vinson. He told me to accompany him and prepare a Memorandum for File so I sensed that the visit was most important to him.. After the warm greetings where they used their first names in conversation but when they got down to business it was Admiral or Mr. Chairman.

Very simply, Admiral Nimitz asked that retired **Admiral Raymond A. Spruance** be promoted to five star rank.

His logic was that four billets were authorized, Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King had died, and that Admiral Spruance had served on a command level with that of FADM Halsey during the war and should be assigned to the same grade if at all possible. He also stated that the two officers were considered equals and when it came time to fill the empty billet, Admiral Halsey was promoted to that grade because he was the senior of the two. So this was the gist of his visit.. Mr. Vinson made no commitment other than to look into it.



There was nothing forthcoming in the matter but years later, the matter was brought to a close. I had written a commentary to the USNI PROCEEDINGS spurred on by the commissioning of the nuclear carrier *CARL VINSON*. It was published in the February 1982 issue. There was a reply in the April 1982 issue from Admiral H. Page Smith saying that he could provide closure.

After Admiral Halsey's funeral in August 1959, FADM Nimitz went to the office of the then Vice Admiral Smith who was Chief of Naval Personnel at the time. He told Admiral Smith to go to Mr. Vinson the next day and find out about the status of the promotion of Admiral Spruance. He did. Mr. Vinson said the five star rank was for war time only. Admiral Smith then said that General Omar Bradley was promoted to five stars in 1947! Whereupon, Mr. Vinson said that it was a mistake and for him to tell FADM Nimitz that we will "Leave it just like it is." Too bad. Senator Lugar of Indiana tried in the early 2000's but no joy. Such is the breaks of the game at the upper levels.

A couple of personal items here. In early 1960, I was serving as Commanding Officer USS *SAVAGE* (DER 386). In view of my association with the admiral, I was given the honor of planting the last monkey pod tree (the 75<sup>th</sup>) on Nimitz Highway, Pearl Harbor in honor of his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday. On 20 February 1966, I also had the sad duty as Commanding Officer to lower morning colors aboard USS *TATTNALL* (DDG 19) moored in Lajes, Azores when it was announced that the admiral had died on 19 February. I count my limited association with Fleet Admiral Nimitz as one of the highlights of my naval career.

**Robert C Peniston, Captain, USN/Retired**  
**Lexington, Virginia**

## THE JERSEYMAN

### Spare 16" Gun Barrels... being sold for scrap

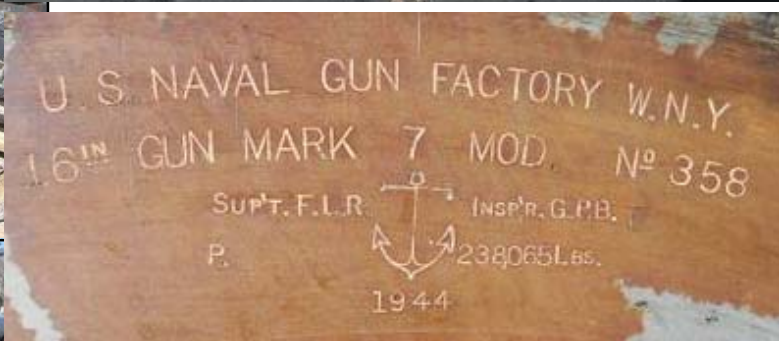
On March 17, 2011, bidders will be able to preview, prior to the start of sale, these items: "3,600,000 lbs approx. Steel Gun Tubes, the shipping cradles and railroad rails that the gun tubes are sitting on are also included in weight and sale". These gun tubes bear the stamps of "U.S. NAVAL GUN FACTORY W. N.Y. 16in GUN MARK 7 MOD" and each bears a serial number along with the date of "1944". Before these gun tubes can be removed from the Army Depot, Nevada, cutting /DEMILLING must be completed within 30 days: "All DEMIL will be performed on site before property may leave".

Thus begins the end of storing replacement gun barrels for our historic and effective battleships with familiar names of USS IOWA (BB-61), USS NEW JERSEY (BB-62), USS MISSOURI (BB-63), AND USS WISCONSIN (BB-64). The 2007 NDAA house bill referenced these parts as spares. The USS Wisconsin and USS Iowa are both considered for service in the event of a National Emergency.

The USNFSA (United States Naval Fire Support Association) makes this report with a heavy heart. For years we have advocated the return of two Iowa Class battleships, and the maintenance of parts and projectiles. We regret that the era of the Iowa Class battleships appears to now be nearing its end unless some member of Congress acts fast!

We want to thank *The Jerseyman* for providing an outlet to our efforts over the past years.

**Ted Yadlowsky**  
Deputy Director USNFSA  
Parkton, Maryland



## THE JERSEYMAN

### **Editor's Note:**

World War II Chief Omer S. Olson, a former World War II crewman of USS BOGUE (CVE-9) and a long time reader of *The Jerseyman*, recently sent us the following notice. It is excerpted here with our thanks to the author, Bob Kruger, Secretary-Treasurer of the USS Bogue Reunion Association:

#### **USS BOGUE REUNION ASS'N TO DISBAND**

***This will be our final newsletter. It is with heavy hearts we report that at our meeting in Pigeon Forge we were forced to admit that we are aging out. A small group of twenty persons, including just five former crewmen of the Bogue were able to attend. Many of our folks would like to attend our annual meetings but are unable to travel due to health problems.***

***Each year we are losing faithful members who have passed away. Our fellowship at past reunions has enriched our lives and reinforced our memories of the days when we were a part of the crew of one remarkable ship, and of our role in the Battle of the Atlantic.***

***What now? I encourage you to begin to write family histories. If you haven't already done so. We may feel that no one cares, but when the younger generations of our families get a little older they will ask themselves, 'Why didn't I ask more questions when I had the chance?' I regret not asking some questions when I had the chance. Five of the folks at Pigeon Forge were children and/or grandchildren of our members...***

Following receipt of this notice, we emailed Omer Olson to talk about his service in USS BOGUE and asked if he would send us a "Looking Back" story from his World War II years. Chief Olson's story is on the following pages.

In our view, Bob Kruger hit the nail on the head with this final note, and we thought that *The Jerseyman* might take from it and repeat his call urging the writing of "family Histories". We also ask that readers consider writing their own "Looking Back" story, such as what follows from Chief Omer Olson.

We are especially asking for stories from the Sailors and Marines of World War II, and the Korean war. In this issue, and in several others before this one, we have had many "Looking Back" stories... but we all know it's only the tip of the iceberg, and there are many stories yet untold. Do it now, do it for your grandkids, and send it in to us at *The Jerseyman*. - TH

### ***LOOKING BACK...***World War II in USS Bogue ***"Babies Are Born Every Day"*** by Omer S. Olson

My memorable visit with the Chaplain was an episode I will not soon forget. On October 20, 1943, USS Bogue (CVE-9) returned to Norfolk, Virginia, after a two month anti-submarine patrol of the North Atlantic Ocean, with the CV-19 Air Squadron aboard.

Our Captain, Joseph B. Dunn, gave seven days leave for the Starboard Section aboard the Aircraft Carrier.



I wanted to travel to Spokane, Washington, because my wife, Korra, was due to have our first child, any day. I thought that the Chaplain just may consider a request for additional days, over and beyond the designated leave period. I felt that the seven days granted was not enough time to travel by train from Norfolk to Spokane. At least, I thought it was worth a try, meeting with Chaplain Lt.(jg) Hewitt. Our visit proved to be extremely brief! He exclaimed, "*Babies are born every day*", and consequently, my request was denied.

That decision made me determined to get to Spokane at any cost, so I purchased an airline ticket for \$286.00 - a lot of money in those days! On the 22nd of October, I high-tailed it for Spokane. Korra, always being the accommodating and dutiful wife, began experiencing labor pains on the evening of the 26th. Because she was living with her folks at the time, her dad, Al Grunerud drove Korra, her mother, Rosie and me to St. Lukes Hospital in his 1937 Chevy. It was very damp and foggy that night, making it all that much more of a nerve-wracking experience. Al was so excited and frantic, that in his hurried exit for the car, he jammed his hat on sideways. It looked so absurd, we all had a good laugh!

Al and Rosie joined me for a few anxious hours, keeping a vigil in the waiting room, until our first-born arrived. Our son was born around noon, October 27th, and was named a while later, after Korra had some time to recuperate from the exhausting ordeal of giving birth.

## THE JERSEYMAN

We named him Omer Luther Olson.

I visited a while longer with my extended family, and then regrettably had to return to Norfolk. I was back aboard the Bogue, on October 30th. We left the harbor on the 14th of November, coincidentally, Korra's 21st birthday. I was 22 years old and not really sure if I'd see either of them again. With the VC-19 Squadron aboard again, the Aircraft Carrier joined the never-ending search for more German submarines, known as U-BOATS, in the icy waters of the North Atlantic Ocean.

Fifty three years later, after attending a few USS BOGUE reunions, and renewing old acquaintances and making new friends, I was given information as to the whereabouts of the Chaplain. Commander Fenelon D. Hewitt, Jr., USN, retired after serving over 20 years in the Navy. He reported having had some good duty after leaving the USS Bogue (CVE-9) in September of 1944. He was in the Marine's 3rd Division on Okinawa as Division Chaplain, at the Coast Guard Academy, some Cruisers, and the USS Ranger (CV-4) being his last sea duty. Now, at the age of 85 years, he lived in Clinton, Missouri. I wrote him a letter on October 28th, gathering this information and reminded him of the events that occurred in 1943. He wrote back November 8th, expressing pleasure that I was able to be home for our son's birth, but explained that he and his wife of sixty one years had two daughters, and he wasn't able to be present for either birth. *Sacrifices were made during war-time!*

Dr. Hewitt passed away at age 87 - about 1999 or 2000.

**Omer S. Olson**  
Spokane Valley, Washington



### Editor's Update:

**Chief Omer Olson** celebrated his 90th birthday on 26 February 2011, and with his wife Korra, will celebrate their 69th wedding anniversary on August 29, 2011. They have five children.

According to Chief Olson, during 2011, their son Omer will be 68, John will be 66, Arthur will be 65, Daughter Arlynn will be 63, and son Ted will be 62. They have 11 grandchildren, and 13 Great-grandchildren... "*as of this date.*" he said. - TH



### **USS BOGUE (CVE-9)**

Built by Seattle-Tacoma. Laid down 1 Oct 1941, launched 15 Jan 1942, acquired by the US Navy on 1 May 1942, and commissioned 26 Sept 1942.

Her designation was changed from AVG to ACV on 20 August 1942 and prior to commissioning. Bogue served as an ASW carrier and transport in the Atlantic.

Decommissioned to reserve on 30 Nov 1946. Re-designated as a helicopter escort carrier (**CVHE-9**), 12 June 1955 while in reserve. Stricken for disposal on 1 March 1959. Sold and subsequently scrapped in Japan in December of 1960. (Source: Hazegray.org)



**USS Bogue (CVE-9)**  
**Naval History and Heritage Command Photo**

## THE JERSEYMAN

### SHIP'S BELLS... BUFFALO NAVAL PARK

Attached are photos of our ship's bells to add to *The Jerseyman* collection. We have bells from **USS Elliot (DD-967)**, **USS Arneb (AKA-56)**, **USS Blanco County (LST-344)**, **USS Quillback (SS-424)** and of course **USS Little Rock (CLG-4)**, the Flagship of our small fleet up here.

Unfortunately the bells from the **USS The Sullivans (DD-537)**, **USS Croaker (SS-246)** and **PTF-17** were "misplaced" when the ships were decommissioned, and they have never been returned. As for the nicknames, **USS Croaker** was called the "Tiger of the Med", **USS Little Rock** was known as "The Rock" and **USS The Sullivans** was known as "The Lucky Ship", **PTF-17** didn't have a name. Something else that might be of interest to *The Jerseyman* readers, is that we also have a segment of one of the 16 inch gun barrels from **USS South Dakota (BB-57)** on display. These guns are of great personal significance because my Dad served aboard **BB-57** during World War II as part of Admiral Lee's Flag Staff.

To any and all former shipmates who served in the **USS The Sullivans (DD-537)** and **USS Croaker (SS-246)**, we are looking for any information on the missing ship's bells from these two old warrior ships. Please contact the Buffalo Naval Park, Buffalo, New York at (716) 847-1773, or you can contact me directly at: [john@buffalonaivalpark.org](mailto:john@buffalonaivalpark.org).

The bells can be returned, *no questions asked*, to 1 Naval Park Cove, Buffalo, New York 14202. It's time to bring these proud U.S. Navy artifacts home where they belong, and for them to be displayed in their original locations aboard ship. Thanks... - **John Branning, AMCS (AW/SW) USN/Ret. Depew, New York**



#### **USS Little Rock (CL-92/CLG-4)**

Nicknamed the "Rock", has been on permanent display in Buffalo, New York since 1979. She is the only Cleveland Class Cruiser still afloat. The ship's bell is on display at the Buffalo Naval Park, Buffalo, New York

#### **USS Arneb (AKA-56/LKA-56)**

An Andromeda-class attack cargo ship named after Arneb, the brightest star in the southern constellation Lepus. She served as a commissioned ship for 27 years and 3 months, the longest time in commission of any AKA.

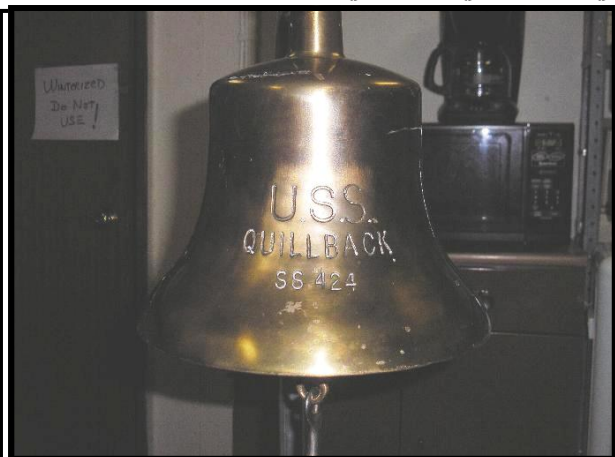
**Arneb (AKA-56)** was laid down under a Maritime Commission contract (MC hull 1159) as **Mischief**. Acquired by the Navy on 16 November 1943, she was converted to an attack cargo ship and commissioned on 28 April 1944. Decommissioned at Norfolk on 12 August 1971, her name was struck from the Navy List the following day. She was sold on 1 March 1973 to Andy International Inc. of Houston, Texas, and scrapped.

**Arneb** received four battle stars for her World War II service, and a Meritorious Unit Commendation for the recovery mission for Apollo 7. The ship's bell is on display at the Buffalo Naval Park, Buffalo, New York



## THE JERSEYMAN

### SHIP'S BELLS... BUFFALO NAVAL PARK



#### USS Quillback (SS-424)

A Tench-class submarine, commissioned on 29 December 1944, she was the only ship of the United States Navy to be named for quillback, a fish of the sucker family.

Stricken from the Naval Vessel Register on 23 March 1973, **Quillback** was sold on 21 March 1974.

**Quillback** earned one Battle Star for her service during World War II. Her bell is now only rung during ceremonies and special occasions.

The ship's bell is on permanent display at the Buffalo Naval Park Museum.

#### USS Blanco County (LST-344)

An LST-1-class tank landing ship built for the United States Navy during World War II. Originally named "**LST-344**", she was later named for Blanco County, Texas, and she was the only U.S. Naval vessel to bear the name.

Commissioned on 14 January 1943, she was decommissioned on 3 October 1969, and berthed at Orange, Texas. Her name was struck from the Naval Vessel Register on 15 September 1974 and was sold to W. L. Weeks in July 1975, for scrapping. **Blanco County** earned three Battle Stars during World War II as **LST-344**, and the Navy Unit Commendation plus five Battle Stars for service during the Vietnam conflict as **Blanco County (LST-344)**.

The ship's bell is on permanent display at the Buffalo Naval Park Museum.



#### USS Elliot (DD-967)

A Spruance-class destroyer named for Lieutenant Commander Arthur J. Elliot, II, USN (1933–1968), who as commanding officer of Patrol Boat River Squadron 57, was killed in action in the Republic Of

Vietnam on 29 December 1968. A former crewmember onboard the **USS Little Rock**, his namesake Quarterdeck Bell is on permanent display in his previous stateroom along with other artifacts from the **USS Elliot**.

The ship's bell is on permanent display at the Buffalo Naval Park Museum.



## THE JERSEYMAN

### SHIP'S BELLS... BUFFALO NAVAL PARK



#### USS *South Dakota* (BB-57)

This photo is of a "Mark 6", 16"/45 caliber battleship gun barrel segment. It was removed from the **USS *South Dakota* (BB-57)** prior to her being sold for scrap in 1962. This type of 16" naval gun fired a new 2,700 lb. Armor piercing shell (AP) over 35 miles.

Firing this heavier shell, the 16"/45 could penetrate 15" of armor plate.

In one of the few battleship engagements of World War II, ***South Dakota*** and the **USS *Washington* (BB-56)**, engaged a Japanese fleet off Guadalcanal, which included the battle cruiser IJN *Kirishima* and two other heavy cruisers, one light cruiser and several destroyers on the nights of November 14-15, 1942. ***South Dakota*** bore the brunt of the Japanese fire, suffering one 14" hit, eighteen 8" hits, six 6" and one 5" shell hits, which left her unarmored tower structure badly damaged (no armored portions of the ship were ever penetrated). Return fire from the undamaged ***Washington*** and ***South Dakota*** wrecked the older IJN *Kirishima*, which later sank. The 16"/45 gun barrel on display was used during this engagement, and it is seen here on permanent display at the Buffalo Naval Park Museum.

**John Branning, AMCS (AW/SW) USN/Ret.**  
**Depew, New York**

### Vietnam Era Display Donations

Please make your check out to "**BATTLESHIP NEW JERSEY MUSEUM**" and write on the notation portion of the check "***Vietnam Exhibit***". Please also send an accompanying note with your check directing that your donated funds are restricted, and to be used *exclusively* for the new Vietnam Era Exhibit. We thank you for your help!

**Jason Hall**  
**Vice President of Curatorial Affairs & Education**  
**for the Battleship New Jersey Museum & Memorial**



## THE JERSEYMAN

*Taps...*



*Edward M. Kolbe, Jr.*

*December 29, 2010*

*Cherry Hill, New Jersey*

Ed was born in Atlantic City, New Jersey and grew up in Ventnor. After graduating from Atlantic City High School, Ed enlisted in the United States Navy. He served two years of active duty during the Korean War, working on the supply ship USS *Warwick* and operating a landing craft.

When Ed left the Navy, and began pursuing his career as an architect, Ed also joined the United States Coast Guard Reserve. In 1970 he was stationed at Gloucester, New Jersey where he operated patrol boats on the Delaware River. Ed served in the Coast Guard Reserve for 23 years, retiring as a Chief Warrant Officer. His last assignment was at the Barnegat, New Jersey station.



In 1972, Ed became the President of the New Jersey Society of Architects. Ed was an active member of the Cherry Hill Rotary Club where he held the rank of President along with other notable positions. He was a founding member of the Charleston Swim Club in Cherry Hill, which was designed by his architectural firm. He was also active with the Rotary Yacht Squadron and the Georgetown Yacht Club on the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland. Ed loved boating and spent many summers traveling the waters of the Chesapeake Bay from the Sassafas River in Maryland to Windmill Point, Virginia with his family.

### **Bob Walters—former Archives and Collections Manager, Battleship New Jersey...**

I remember, that it was about December of 2001, when Ed Kolbe first reported aboard. The ship was still mostly dark, it was always cold, and less than half the lights had been brought to life. I saw **Dan Farrell** coming out of the dark followed by a new volunteer. ‘Bob, this is **Ed Kolbe**, do you have some curatorial work for him?’ Yes, we did. We had just received a donation of 800 plus books from a retiring book dealer, and we had them piled high in boxes and sitting in a main deck storage compartment just aft of the mail room... ‘OK Ed, let’s start separating the books into eras of military service starting with NAVY... such as, ship types, battles, biographies, and please remember, no fiction!’ Ed then said, with his ready grin, ‘ok, what do you want me to do when I finish?’ By day’s end, Ed had many of the books re-boxed and ready to store as requested.

After that first day, I really didn’t expect to see Ed very much because of the cold, the nearly non-existent lighting, and of course our early days in the ship still had that distinct wet steel aroma that we all carried home in our clothes. But we did see Ed return, and he returned again and again for many years, working in the library cataloging and shelving many of our donated books along with shipmate volunteer **Bob Cristine**.

We were all very saddened when, because of illness, Ed just couldn’t make it back to the ship. Ed became a friend and shipmate to all of us. We miss him, his great sense of humor, and his mutual respect for his shipmates and the military. Fair Winds And Following Seas shipmate... - Bob Walters

## THE JERSEYMAN

### BATTLESHIP DAYS... BY HAMP LAW (1923 - 2010)



In six short days God made the world  
On the seventh day He rested  
When someone asked what would He do  
Should freedom er'e be tested  
A smile came upon His face  
A tear was in His eye  
He said "I've made A FEW GOOD MEN  
And He whispered...  
"SEMPER FI"

*World War II Memorial  
Washington, D.C.*



Logo courtesy of Maritime Artist and  
former USS NEW JERSEY crewman,  
**James A. Flood**

#### Disclaimer:

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Tom Helvig, CTRCM, USN (Retired - 1975)  
Volunteer Writer/Editor *The Jerseyman*  
68 Boothby Drive  
Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054  
email: Thelvig@aol.com  
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